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INFORMATIONAL NOTICE**TO: Participating Physicians, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Centers and Encounter Rate Clinics****RE: Breastfeeding and Lactation Counseling**

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) recommends that all babies, with rare exceptions, be breastfed and/or receive expressed human milk exclusively without supplemental foods and liquids for about the first six months of life. AAFP further recommends that breastfeeding should continue with the addition of complementary foods from six to twelve months of age. The AAFP's policy statement on breastfeeding is available at:

<http://www.aafp.org/x6633.xml>

In February 2005, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released a new policy statement on breastfeeding, "Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk." In this policy statement, the AAP recommends breastfeeding for healthy, premature and high-risk infants. The policy states that "Pediatricians and other health care professionals should recommend human milk for all infants in whom breastfeeding is not specifically contraindicated and provide parents with complete, current information on the benefits and techniques of breastfeeding to ensure that their feeding decision is a fully informed one." The policy further notes that breastfeeding should be continued through at least the first year of life and beyond as mutually desired by the mother and child. The AAP policy statement also recommends that "Hospitals and physicians should recommend human milk for premature and other high-risk infants either by direct breastfeeding and/or using the mother's own expressed milk." The policy statement can be viewed in its entirety at:

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;115/2/496#top>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) strongly supports breastfeeding and encourages its Fellows and other health care professionals to support women in choosing to breastfeed their infants since breastfeeding is the preferred method of feeding for newborns and infants. The ACOG policy statement on breastfeeding is available at:

http://www.acog.org/departments/dept_notice.cfm?recno=18&bulletin=3197

In continuing HFS' efforts to improve health outcomes of infants and children, providers are encouraged to discuss the benefits of breastfeeding with pregnant women and women who are planning a pregnancy. Breastfeeding is recognized as the optimal method of infant feeding for the first year of life with many benefits for healthy, premature and high-risk infants. Human breast milk is rich in nutrients, providing everything a baby needs on a daily basis. It contains many substances that keep babies healthy and promote optimal growth and development. In addition, breast milk contains antibodies that protect babies from illness.

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health, Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding cites the following benefits to breastfed babies:

- Resistance to infectious diseases
- Enhanced immune system
- Nutritional and growth benefits
- Reduced risk for chronic diseases
- Developmental benefits
- Improved mental health
- Socioeconomic benefits

The complete Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding is available for viewing at:

<http://www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding/index.cfm?page=233>

Breastfed babies are sick less often and have fewer visits to health care providers. Breastfed babies are less likely to have allergies and dental caries and benefit from appropriate jaw, teeth and speech development. In addition, research has shown a positive association between longer breastfeeding and improved school performance in children and adolescents and higher IQ in adults. Lastly, breastfeeding has psychological benefits for both the mother and infant. Breastfeeding is a time of physical contact and closeness, nurturing the bond between mother and child.

Following are some suggested topics to discuss:

- Breast milk is the best food you can give your baby in his or her first year of life.
- Breast milk helps to protect your baby from many illnesses.
- Breastfeeding saves money because you do not have to buy formula.
- Breastfeeding is easier than mixing formula or heating bottles.
- Breastfeeding helps you bond with your baby. Holding your baby while nursing helps your baby feel loved and close to you.
- Nursing uses extra calories and makes it easier for you to lose weight after your baby is born.
- Nursing helps your body get back to normal after your pregnancy.
- Breastfeeding lowers your risk of getting some kinds of cancer.

Breastfeeding Resources

Organization	Internet Address
Peer Counseling on Breastfeeding is available from The National Women's Health Information Center 1-800-994-WOMAN (9662); TDD 1-888-220-5446	http://www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding/
Food and Drug Administration	http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/895_brstfeed.html
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development	http://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/womenhealth/breastfeeding.cfm
Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, USDA	http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Breastfeeding/breastfeedingmainpage.HTM
American Academy of Pediatrics	http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/breastfeeding.cfm
American Academy of Family Physicians	http://www.aafp.org/htdigsearch/htsearch?words=breastfeeding&x=15&y=11

For your convenience, all Internet links listed in this notice are accessible in a single location at:

<http://www.hfs.illinois.gov/breastfeeding/>

Reimbursement for Breast Pumps

HFS provides reimbursement for breast pumps for women who need to return to school or work. Effective January 1, 2006 electric breast pumps are covered without prior approval. The pump must be ordered by a physician and obtained through a Durable Medical Equipment provider. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides education on how to use the breast pump and how to store breast milk.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Providers are also encouraged to refer pregnant women to the WIC program. The WIC program has many services to help mothers who breastfeed their babies. The WIC program promotes breastfeeding, and provides education, classes, counseling and direct support for low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women. Lactation consultants who are trained in lactation management are available to help mothers achieve their breastfeeding goals. Lactation consultants provide education and support in both the prenatal and postpartum periods.

WIC has many other services available to help pregnant women or women with children younger than five. Please refer the following women to WIC:

- Women who are pregnant or who had a baby within the past 6 months;
- Women who are breastfeeding and have a baby younger than 1;
- Women who have a child younger than 5.

Call the toll-free Human Services Help Line at 1-800-323-4769, (Voice and TTY) to help a pregnant or breastfeeding woman locate a WIC agency near their home.

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Administrator
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